



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Lakeview District Office
HC10 Box 337 - 1300 South G Street
Lakeview, Oregon 97630
email address: or010mb@or.blm.gov



4200 (015)

February 5, 2001

Dear Recipient:

The Lakeview District, Bureau of Land Management, is proposing to construct approximately 14.3 miles of fence within the ZX Christmas Lake Allotment (#10103). The purpose of the proposed project is to control livestock and wild horse drift and improve grazing management within the Lost Forest Research Natural Area and Sand Dunes Wilderness Study Area in northern Lake County, Oregon (see enclosed map).

An Environmental Assessment (EA#OR-010-2001-02) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) have been prepared to document the impacts of the proposal. Copies of these documents are available for review by writing to the Lakeview District Office, HC 10 Box 337, Lakeview, Oregon 97630, or by calling Theresa Romasko or Paul Whitman at (541) 947-2177. The documents are also available on the district web page at www.or.blm.gov/Lakeview/eas/eas.htm. If you wish to provide comments on the proposal you must do so, in writing, by March 9, 2001.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Florence, Manager
Lakeview Resource Area

Enclosure (as stated)

DECISION RECORD

EA Log No. OR-010-2001-02

Project Name ZX Christmas Lake Fences

Applicant BLM

Address HC 10 Box 337, Lakeview, OR 97630

County Lake

BLM Office Lakeview District

Phone No. (541)-947-2177

DECISION RECORD

Decision: The following is the decision of the Bureau:

Construct approximately 14.3 miles of new fence in the ZX Christmas Lake Allotment #10103, as described in Alternative 2 of EA No. OR-010-2001-02 and shown on the maps associated with the EA as Alternative C. Fences would be 3-wire design in accordance with BLM standards. Fences would be designed to prevent livestock and wild horse movement, without preventing wild life movement. Two miles of the fence would be on the Boundary of the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area (HMA).

Project Completion:

The Saunders Rim portion of fence is scheduled for construction in spring of 2000. The remaining fence and cattle guard installation is dependent on funding, but may be constructed as soon as the spring of 2002.

Rationale:

The fences will help control cattle drift in the West Vaughn and Fossil Lake pastures. Cattle drift from BLM onto private land near the Fossil Lake pasture would also be reduced. Wild horses would be prevented from moving outside the HMA near Saunders Rim. The fence would assist in keeping horses inside the HMA, where more dependable water sources are available. Improvement of livestock grazing in special management areas including the Sand Dunes Wilderness Study Area, Fossil Lake Closure Area, and Lost Forest Research Natural Areas will be possible with the new fences.

One positive comment was received during the comment period for this EA. One other comment was received concerning the Over-The-Horizon Backscatter withdrawal area. A memorandum of understanding will be developed to address those comments.

Ken Restrod
for Scott Florence

Manager, Lakeview Resource Area

20 March 2001

Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FONSI

ZX Christmas Lake Fences

EA# OR-010-2001-02

The Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District, Lakeview Resource Area, has analyzed a proposal and alternatives to construct approximately 14.3 miles of 3 wire fence in the ZX Christmas Lake Allotment #10103. The objective of the proposed project is to control livestock and wild horse drift, and to provide pastures for improved grazing management in the Lost Forest RNA, and Sand Dunes WSA. This project is in conformance with the High Desert Management Framework Plan and the 1983 Lakeview Grazing Environmental Impact Statement.

There are no floodplains, wild and scenic rivers, known hazardous waste sites, areas of religious concern, prime or unique farmlands in the immediate area. Project construction would occur outside the Sand Dunes WSA, Lost Forest RNA and Fossil Lake Closure Area. No adverse or beneficial impacts are anticipated to lands or minerals. If found the project will be moved away from endangered plants or cultural or paleontological resources.

On the basis of the analysis contained in the attached EA and all other available information, it is my determination that none of the alternatives analyzed constitutes a major federal action that would adversely impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is unnecessary and will not be prepared.

Scott R. Florence
Scott R. Florence, Manager
Lakeview Resource Area

1/19/01
Date

PROJECT TITLE/TYPE: ZX-Christmas Lake Fences

PROJECT LOCATION: ZX Christmas Lake Allotment #10103 (see attached map).

BLM OFFICE: Lakeview Resource Area, Lakeview District

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN: This proposed action is subject to the following land use plans.

Name of Plans: High Desert and/or Warner Lakes Management Framework Plans (MFPs), as amended (1982, 1983, 1989, and 1995), Lakeview Grazing Management FEIS and ROD (1982), Oregon Wilderness FEIS and ROD (1989 and 1991), Wilderness Interim Management Policy (1995), Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States FEIS and ROD (1991), Supplement to the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program FEIS and ROD (1987), Integrated Noxious Weed Control Program EA #OR-013-93-03 (1994), Lakeview District Fire Management Plan - Phase 1 (1998), Rangeland Reform '94 FEIS and ROD (1995), and Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington (1997).

Remarks: The Lakeview Grazing Management EIS evaluated several different types of range improvement projects for grazing allotments in the Lakeview Resource Area, including fence construction. Table B-3, Page B-9, shows proposed fence construction of 63 miles in the 10103 Allotment, however the exact location of the fences was not determined. 37.5 miles of fence have been constructed in the allotment since the Lakeview Grazing EIS was finalized

PURPOSE and NEED FOR ACTION

The proposed action would help control cattle drift in the West Vaughn and Fossil Lake pastures. Cattle drift onto private land in the Fossil Lake pasture would also be stopped. Wild horses drift from the West Vaughn Pasture of the Paisley Desert Herd Management Area (HMA) could be controlled. Currently horses are drifting outside the HMA where no natural water sources occur. There is potential for horses to die from lack of water without the proposed fence.

The fences in the Fossil Lake pasture would divide the Fossil Lake pasture into three pastures(North Fossil Lake, Middle, and South Fossil Lake). The Middle pasture would include most of the Sand Dunes Wilderness Study Area (WSA), Fossil Lake Closure Area, and Lost Forest Research Natural Area (RNA). Grazing use in the Middle pasture would be limited, and would normally be trailing use only. The South Fossil Lake and North Fossil Lake pastures would not include any of the special areas listed above. Cattle grazing could be managed in the special areas without affecting the entire allotment. The crested wheatgrass seeding in the proposed North Fossil Lake pasture provides most of the forage in the present Fossil Lake pasture. The crested wheatgrass seeding would be grazed separate from the WSA, RNA and Fossil Lake Closure Area.

DESCRIPTION of PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action is to construct approximately 12.5 miles of fence in the Fossil Lake pasture and 1.8 miles of fence in the West Vaughn pasture for a total of approximately 14.3 miles of new fence. See attached Maps. The fence would be 3-wire design in accordance with The BLM standards as outlined in the Lakeview Grazing EIS pages 1-22 through 1-25. Fences would be designed to prevent livestock and wild horse, movement without stopping wildlife movement (wild horses are present only in the West Vaughn pasture). Maintenance and repair of the fences would be the responsibility of the grazing permittee.

ALTERNATIVES:

#1) NO ACTION - Do not construct new fence.

Maintain the present situation. This would not allow new fence construction for management of livestock and wild horses. This would limit the opportunity for improved grazing management, and allows for drift of wild horses outside the Paisley Desert EMA.

#2) ALTERNATIVE 1 - Remove livestock grazing and wild horse use from BLM land in the area. This alternative was considered, but dropped from further analysis. The Lakeview Grazing EIS analyzed an alternative to eliminate grazing. Eliminating grazing and wild horse use in the area is not consistent with the Record of Decision (ROD) resulting from the EIS

#3) ALTERNATIVE 2 (PREFERRED PLAN) - Implement the proposed action. Construct approximately 14.3 mile of fence in the ZX Christmas Lake allotment #10103

#4) ALTERNATIVE 3- Construct the fences in alternate locations. Consider alternate fence location. Alternate fence locations outside of special areas are feasible. Fence construction within the boundaries of special areas would be inconsistent with the special area status, and largely infeasible. The most feasible alternate fence location is shown in green on the attached maps.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT:

CLIMATE, TOPOGRAPHY, ELEVATION

The affected area is commonly referred to as the high desert region of the Great Basin. Annual precipitation in the area ranges from a low of 8 inches per year, in the West Vaughn pasture, to a high of 12 inches per year in the north portion of the Fossil Lake pasture. Precipitation normally occurs in the form of snow during the months of December through March. Elevation varies from 4300 to 4700 feet

VEGETATION AND SOILS

Vegetation in the area of proposed fence construction in the West Vaughn pasture is Big sagebrush. Common grasses in the area are squirreltail, Thurbers needle grass, and Sandbergs bluegrass. Associated soils are shallow, usually less than 12 inches deep, from volcanic origin, are very stony and generally have low productivity.

Vegetation and soils in the Fossil Lake pasture are extremely variable. The majority of soils in the proposed area of the south fence construction are Alkali affected, having high levels of sodium. Soils are moderately deep, but unfavorable for plant growth. Shadscale, hopsage, bigsagebrush & rabbitbrush are the main brush species. Common grasses include squirreltail, saltgrass, creeping wildrye and basin wildrye. Fence in the northwest portion of the Fossil Lake pasture crosses a large area planted to crested wheatgrass.

FOREST HABITAT

Forest habitat is outside the proposed project area in the Lost Forest RNA

RECREATION

Recreation in the area includes, hunting, use of four wheel drive vehicle, and sightseeing.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The Lost Forest RNA is currently designated as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I. Fence construction is not proposed in the Lost Forest RNA

The proposed fence separating the North and Middle Fossil Lake pastures is located in VRM Class IV, which allows landscape alterations to dominate the landscape.

The proposed fence separating the Middle and South Fossil Lake (and possible alternate locations) is located within VRM class III, alterations may attract attention but should not dominate the view and the scenic quality should be partially maintained.

WILDERNESS

The Sand Dunes WSA falls within the Fossil Lake pasture.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife species common to the area include coyotes, small mammals, raptors, song birds, reptiles and amphibians common to south central Oregon.

WILD HORSES

Wild horses from the Paisley Desert HMA are present in the West Vaughn pasture.

FISH AND AQUATIC HABITAT, HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

Fish and aquatic habitat and hazardous waste sites are not present in the area.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The potential environmental impacts resulting from the alternatives relative to the following critical resource values were considered. The following is a summary of the results:

Critical Element/ Resource Value	Significantly Affected		Critical Element/ Resource Value	Significantly Affected	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality		X	T & E Species		X
ACEE/RKAs		X	Wilderness		X
Cultural Resources		X	Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X	Hazardous Wastes		X
Floodplains		X	Water Quality		X
Native American Cultural/ Religious Concerns		X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X
Low Income/ Minority Populations		X	Noxious Weeds		X

DESCRIPTION of OTHER IMPACTS:

No Action:

No change to the existing resources of soils, vegetation, wildlife, or recreation would occur under this alternative. The drift problems with livestock and wild horses would continue. Potentially wild horses would be in danger when straying outside the HMA, and face death from lack of dependable water.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

VEGETATION AND SOILS

Vegetation and soils will be slightly impacted during construction, through post pounding and vehicle use. Vegetation and soils may be disturbed and compacted. In the long term, the health of the vegetation and soil community is expected to improve with improved grazing management, and no long term detrimental affects are expected.

FOREST HABITAT

The forest habitat will be maintained in the Lost Forest RNA.

RECREATION

The fence northernmost fence crosses a road, influencing recreationists. They would have a gate impeding travel, which may need to be open or closed depending

on the time of year. The area of the greatest recreation use would have beneficial impacts through reduced livestock use, and less conflict between the two uses.

VISUAL RESOURCES

No fence construction would occur in VRM Class I, and none is proposed. The fence located in VRM Class IV is consistent with class IV in which landscape alterations are allowed to dominate the landscape. The fence located in VRM Class III is consistent with the criteria that alterations may attract attention, but should not dominate the landscape. It should be noted that the Department of Defense (DoD) back scatter radar site is located near the area of the proposed fence, and this radar facility dominates the view. Fence construction is insignificant compared to this facility.

WILDERNESS/ACEC/RNA

Beneficial impacts to ACEC/RNA and Wilderness may occur with improved grazing management, and reduced use. Fences would be constructed outside boundaries of special areas for the most part, or on the boundary. The exact fence location may vary slightly, especially as it crosses the Department of Defense (DoD) withdrawal. See maps.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife may be disrupted during initial construction. Fences will be designed to provide for wildlife movement so that no long term negative impacts to wildlife are expected. Wildlife may benefit from additional forage as overall health of the ecosystem improves.

WILD HORSES

Wild horses would benefit from the fence in the Vaughn pasture. The fence would prevent wild horses in the Paisley Desert HMA from straying outside the HMA, where water is undependable. Horses may initially be confused with a new fence. No long term negative impacts to wild horses would occur.

Alternative 3: - Alternate fence location. Impacts from this alternative are essentially the same as those for the proposed action.

SECONDARY, INDIRECT, AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS.

Beneficial impacts may occur over time as the overall health of the watershed improves. Surrounding areas may benefit from increased plant health, vigor, and ground cover which will assist in stabilizing soils and reducing runoff after water producing events. No negative secondary, indirect or cumulative impacts are expected to occur from the proposed action.

DESCRIPTION of MITIGATION MEASURES and RESIDUAL IMPACTS:

Surveys for archeological and botanical resources would be completed prior to fence construction. The fence location may be modified to avoid damage to these resources if needed. Place a sign on the gate crossing the road so that the public knows access is available.

NOXIOUS WEED CONSIDERATIONS: No noxious weeds are known to exist in the project area. If any weed sites are discovered during construction, they will be treated in accordance with the Lakeview noxious weed plan/EA.

SENSITIVE PLANTS AND CULTURAL/HISTORIC FEATURES. No cultural/historical sites have been reported in the project area, nor are there any sensitive plant species. If these resources are found they will be mitigated as described under mitigations.

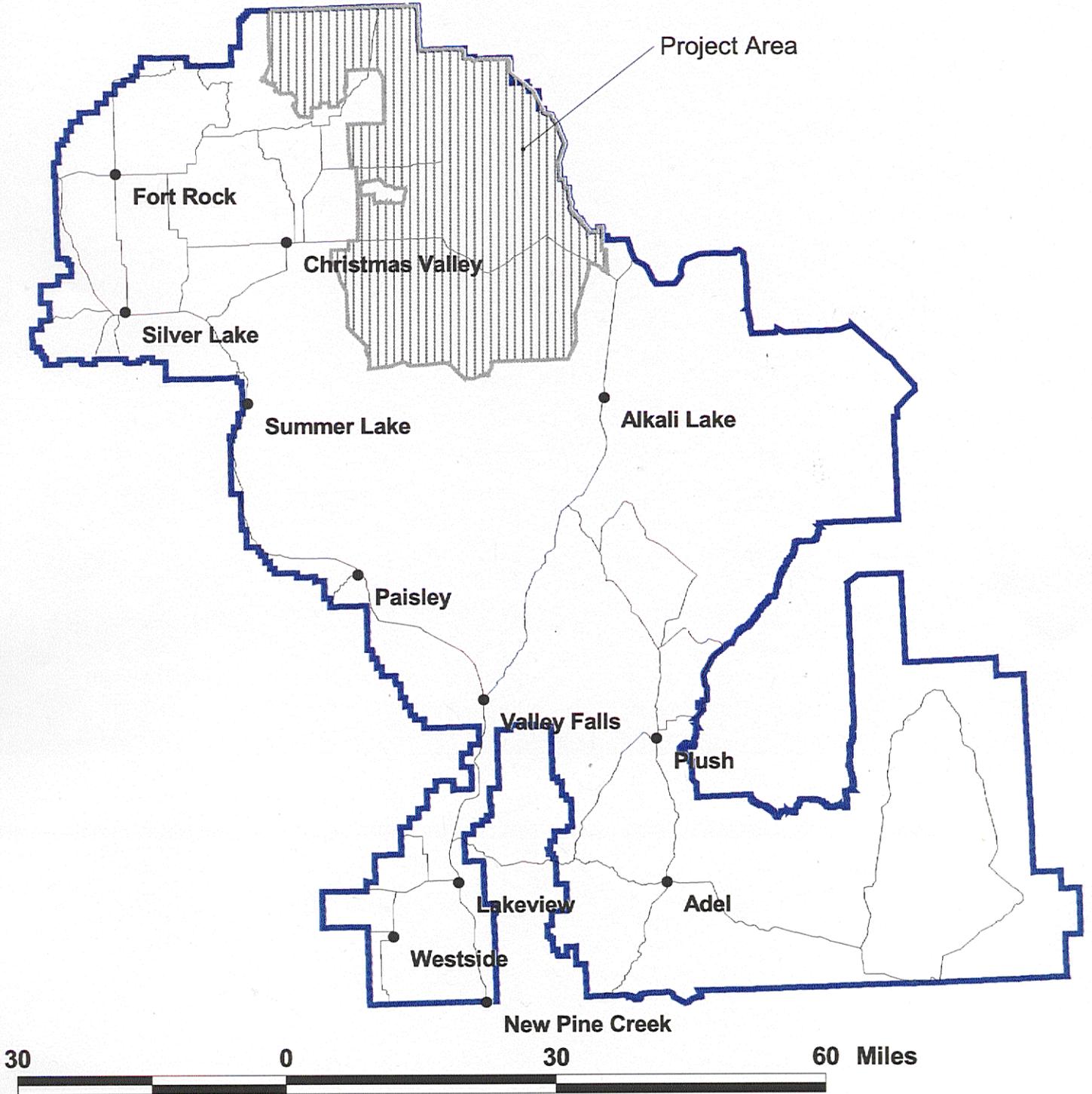
PERSON(S) / AGENCIES CONSULTED

BLM grazing permittee

PREPARER(S):

Theresa Romasko, Rangeland Management Specialist
with BLM interdisciplinary review

General Location Map



-  Project Area
-  Major Roads
-  Cities
-  Lakeview Resource Area Boundary



Saunders Rim Fence Alternative

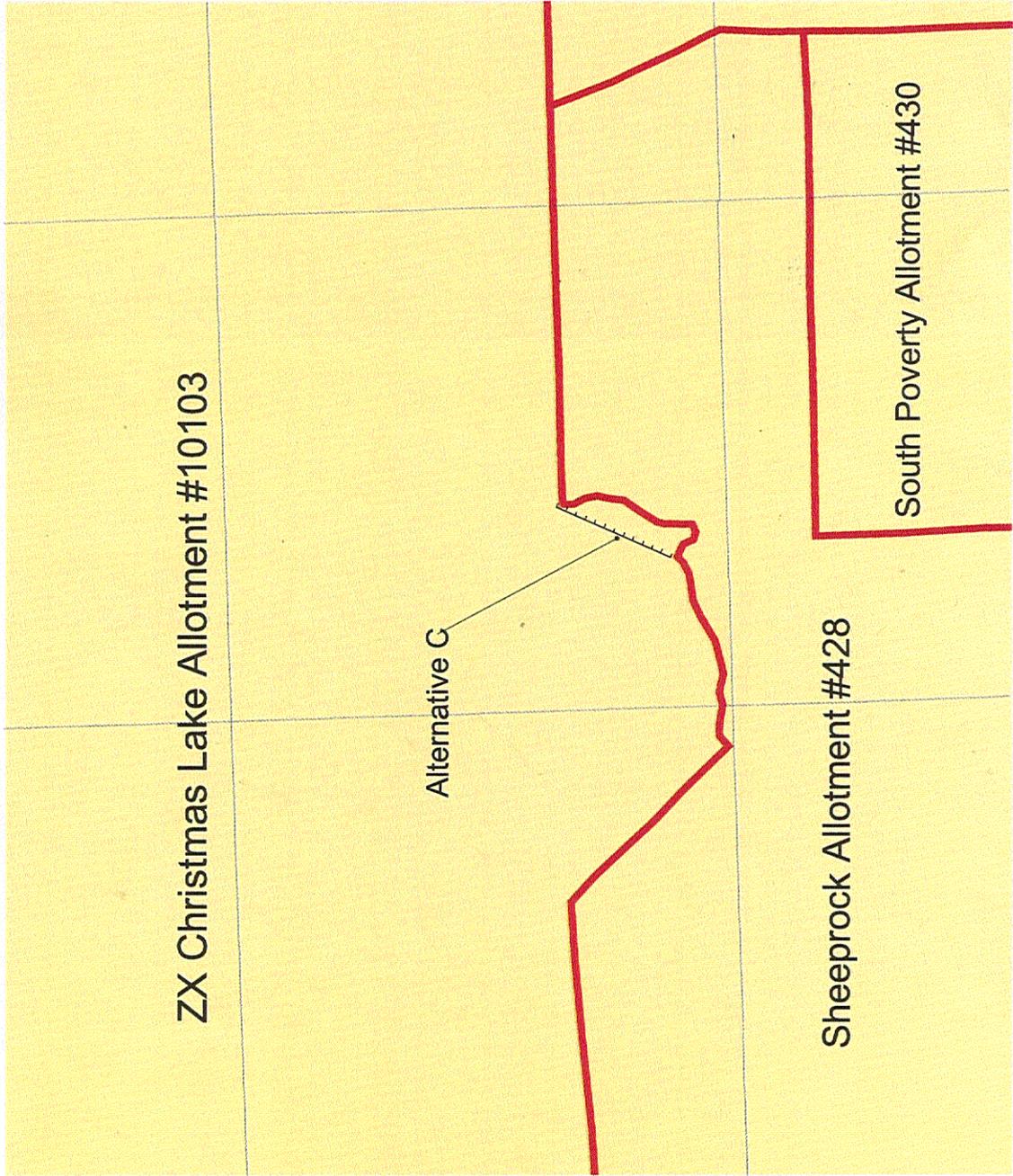
R. 20 E.

R. 21 E.

R. 22 E.

T. 28 S.

T. 29 S.

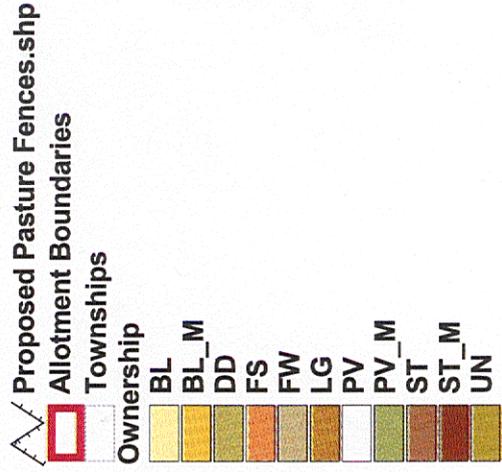


ZX Christmas Lake Allotment #10103

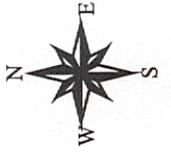
Alternative C

Sheeprock Allotment #428

South Poverty Allotment #430



6 Miles



ZX - Christmas Lake Fence Alternatives

